

VIEWPOINTS



A quarterly newsletter for the
Parkinson's Community of British Columbia

WINTER
2016

4

Dr. Sheila Silver
Answers Your Questions
on Sexuality and
Parkinson's Disease

6

Recycling
Kindness

11

2017 Year at
a Glance

12

The Joy of
Volunteering

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OUR MISSION Parkinson Society British Columbia exists to address the personal and social consequences of Parkinson's disease through education, outreach, scientific research, advocacy and public awareness.

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Your support is essential!

PSBC would not exist without the generosity of its members, donors and volunteers since it receives no government support.

The following are the many ways you can support your society:

Membership—\$25 annual fee

Monthly or Quarterly Donation

United Way

Remember PSBC when giving through United Way

Special Events

Your participation in our special events makes a difference

Planned Giving and Bequests

Consider **PSBC** as a beneficiary in your Will

Editorial Statement

The views and opinions expressed within the pages of *Viewpoints* are not necessarily those of Parkinson Society British Columbia. The intention is to provide the reader with a wide range of material. Parkinson Society British Columbia welcomes submissions for the newsletter. The editor reserves the right to edit material and to withhold material from publication.

Articles contained in *Viewpoints* are for information only. PSBC does not guarantee nor endorse any product or claim made by an author. In matters of medical treatment or therapy, patients should consult their physicians.

Support Groups

100 Mile House, Abbotsford, Burnaby, Campbell River, Chilliwack, Chinese Speaking (Burnaby), Courtenay/Comox Valley, Cranbrook, Delta/Ladner, Duncan/Cowichan Valley, Elk Valley (formerly Sparwood), Fort St. John, Kamloops, Kelowna, Kelowna Caregivers, Kootenay Lake East Shore, Ladner, Langley, Langley YOPD, Lion's Bay, Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge Caregivers, Mission, Nanaimo, Nelson, New Diagnosis 1 & 2 (Vancouver), New Westminster, North Shore, North Shore Caregivers, Osoyoos/Oliver, Parksville/Qualicum, Parksville/Qualicum Caregivers, Penticton, Penticton Caregivers, Powell River, Prince George, Quadra Island, Quesnel, Richmond, Shuswap/Salmon Arm, South Sunshine Coast (Sechelt), Terrace, Trail/Castlegar, Tri Cities, Tri Cities Caregivers, Tsawwassen, Vancouver Arbutus, Vancouver Caregivers, Vancouver West Side, Vernon, White Rock, YOPD Online

holiday greetings

We've had an incredible and eventful year at Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC). I am humbled by the support the Society has received from the Parkinson's community, including our board, volunteers, staff and membership. Every year, we are introduced to more stories of hope and courage that make all of our efforts worthwhile; and, for the staff at PSBC, it gives us great pride in what we do.

As you may have noticed, there have been some changes at Parkinson Society British Columbia. In 2016, we made an active effort to expand our reach and strengthen our impact by utilizing new methods for the delivery of programs and improving awareness building.

In April, we launched our annual Parkinson's Awareness Month campaign, *This is Parkinson's disease*. Our visually striking campaign featured the photos of five British Columbians diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, aiming to demonstrate that the disease does not discriminate based on age, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender. Venturing into new territory, we featured the photos in transit ads in major cities across the province. We have since heard feedback that the ads were noticed by a new audience and age demographic, suggesting that the campaign was successful in awareness building. Furthermore, we are pleased to share that our campaign was selected as one of the top 10% of submissions to the World Parkinson Congress (WPC) in Portland, Oregon this past September, and we were offered the opportunity to showcase it in the Congress' exhibit hall. This campaign, and our presence at WPC, is yet another example of how we are striving to be a part of the global push to educate the public about Parkinson's,

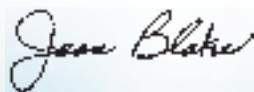
while demonstrating that there is no single "face" that can represent the disease; each person's experience with Parkinson's disease is unique.

With that in mind, we have continued to grow our education, programs and services. This year, we strengthened our train-the-trainer course offerings, which introduce experts in various fields to Parkinson's specific programming – thereby increasing the availability of such programs across the province. These sessions included programs such as *SongShine* and *Dance for PD*[®]. We have also focused greater effort on developing resources for the community, such as publishing a new booklet on communication & swallow issues in partnership with Sherri Zelazny, MA RSLP.

Looking ahead, the number of British Columbians with Parkinson's is expected to increase significantly by 2031. Together, with over 50 dedicated individuals from across the province, we have actively advocated for improved conditions for British Columbians with the disease. Our primary goals at the moment include ensuring Parkinson's patients have affordable access to the medications they need, decreasing waitlist times for movement disorder clinics, as well as improving knowledge of the disease amongst health care professionals.

The end of the calendar year is unique in that it is an opportunity to reflect while continuing to move forward. It is our hope that we can continue to work together to improve the lives of those affected by Parkinson's disease.

On behalf of all of us here at PSBC, we wish you good health and warm wishes this holiday season!



Jean Blake
Chief Executive Officer

PSBC staff celebrating a successful Parkinson SuperWalk at Stanley Park in Vancouver.



ask an expert

DR. SHEILA SILVER

Answers Your Questions on Sexuality and Parkinson's Disease



Sheila Silver, MA, DHS, ACS Dr. Sheila Silver is a board certified clinical sexologist in private practice in Portland, Oregon. She sees individuals and couples for a range of sexological issues including desire

discrepancies, orgasm difficulties, pain with intercourse, alternative relationships and maintaining intimacy in the face of chronic illness, with a specific expertise in Parkinson's disease. She has a Masters degree in Marriage, Family and Child Therapy and a Doctoral degree in Human Sexuality.



What do you do as a sexologist?

As a clinical sexologist, I offer sexual information, counselling and workshops for individuals, couples, therapists, clergy and health care professionals. Often shame, trauma or simply a lack of education prevents people from creating the sex life they want. My intention is to create an environment where people can feel comfortable talking about their beliefs, attitudes, life history and behavior, to see how all of that impacts their struggles. I then offer suggestions of things they can read, think about and do at home, to make small changes that can shift their perspective and experience.



In September 2016, you presented on Creating and Keeping Intimacy in Your Relationships at the World Parkinson Congress in Portland, Oregon. What are some tips you have for people with Parkinson's disease who want to maintain intimacy with their partners?

The first thing I always recommend is communicating with your partner about how you are feeling about your sexual relationship, and to share ideas you have to create more intimacy. Often couples haven't needed to communicate about sex prior to a PD diagnosis or health issues that affect their sexuality. Conversations where the couple can be allies toward a common goal can help to eliminate defensiveness and allow for collaboration in creating a sex life where the goals are simply pleasure and connection. I also encourage couples to expand their definition of "sex". I invite them to view sex as a buffet of many options that feel physically good and promote emotional intimacy. This enables couples to create a new experience every time, choosing different things from the "buffet" based on their energy levels, mood and abilities. Finally, prioritizing physically connecting with your partner, even if it means putting intimacy on the calendar, indicates to each of them that it is important and something they both want. Even if it is simply naked cuddling, or each person receiving 10 minutes of touch that they ask for, these are ways couples can feel close, connected and more than roommates!

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? What are some common misconceptions about aging and sexuality?

The biggest misconception is that older adults are less interested in sexuality. Although there are changes in sexual drive and sexual response with age, these changes do not mean older people are not sexual. On the contrary, for most adults pleasure and interest don't diminish with age, but how we choose to express ourselves sexually changes. For example, intercourse may be more difficult or painful due to health issues or menopause, but older adults still enjoy erotic sensual pleasure with an intimate partner, with or without orgasm.

? How may Parkinson's affect genders differently, in terms of sexuality?

The sexual side effects of PD are very similar for both genders. Loss of desire, depression, sleep issues, hypersexuality caused by medications, large and small motor changes, difficulty achieving orgasm and diminished facial animation can all impact a sexual relationship. Men can also often have erectile issues and women may experience pain with intercourse. It is important for patients to report these changes to their doctor, so adjustments can be made and they can be referred to other professionals who can be of help.

? Do you have any words of advice for someone considering scheduling an appointment with a sexologist or counsellor who specializes in sexuality, but who may be shy or uncomfortable?

I would suggest sharing your discomfort with the therapist so the two of you discuss this right at the beginning. I always reassure my clients that I understand how hard it can be to discuss the most intimate aspects of their life with someone they don't know, particularly if they have never done that before with anyone. I assure the client that I have "heard it



all" and I am very comfortable with anything they want to share. I often convey my admiration for them for their willingness to ask for help in this area. Their courage and honesty can make a real difference in solving the issues that bring them to my office.

? Are there any resources people with Parkinson's can access from home if they would like to know more?

I can recommend three books that give more context for many of these topics I have discussed here. One is *Sexual Intelligence* by Marty Klein. Although it is not specifically about PD, it explains in greater detail the need to expand one's definition of sex as we age and/or face chronic illness. Another good book is *Naked At Our Age* by Joan Price which gives some sex education for older adults. Finally, Maria De Leon's book, *Parkinson's Diva: A Woman's Guide to Parkinson's Disease* is wonderful. She is a medical doctor so she brings a medical perspective, but she is also a woman with PD and writes informatively about the challenges facing women with Parkinson's.

Due to popular demand, PSBC is working to provide more resources regarding sexuality and Parkinson's disease in the near future. In addition to the excellent books recommended by Dr. Silver, we encourage you to access the following online resources:

- Intimacy and Sexual Health (video): <http://bit.ly/IntimacySexualHealth>
- National Parkinson Foundation – Sexual Health (website): <http://bit.ly/NPFSexualHealth>

Recycling Kindness



Roger Legg (right) with friends at the gym.

My first indication that something was not right started after I passed a kidney stone. While I was on the way to hospital my right arm began to feel alien to me and I told the doctor at the hospital what was happening. He ordered an MRI of my one kidney and my brain just in case I was having a mini stroke. The scan showed no indication that anything was wrong, so I was sent home.

The strange feeling in my right arm persisted. I tried chiropractic and acupuncture but the sensation continued. Problems with writing and signing my name started to appear. It also interfered with riding my motorcycle, playing guitar and going to the gym. My wife, Maureen, also noticed that my speech had slowed and my pronunciation was not clear. Eventually, I was referred to a neurologist who diagnosed early stage Parkinson's. I was stunned. After living healthily for 75 years, I now had to fight with the debilitating effects of this disease.

My wife, Maureen, is my support and strength. Together we joined a support group that meets once a month. By chance, it turns out my former

landlord from the eighties was part of the group. We had a few support group facilitators; one passed away, and another was also a caregiver to his wife with Parkinson's. He eventually found the roles of support group leader and caregiver too demanding, so he asked for someone to take over. Although I volunteered for this about 15 months ago, I found it was too much to do alone, so along with two acquaintances, we now co-facilitate. Between the three of us, we had many contacts and were able to have some interesting speakers over the five years that I have been with the group. There has been a wide range of subjects covered including wills, banking and tips on how to maintain a healthy, active lifestyle; these have been most helpful.

The support group has been incredibly helpful as I combat the symptoms of Parkinson's. It wasn't long after joining the group that Maureen and I wanted to give back in some way to Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC). It was a bit of a brain teaser to think of ways to raise money. While out walking around our home in North Vancouver, we gradually realized how many bottles and cans were being thrown away and decided to give collecting a whirl.

It felt odd at first, but gradually, after Maureen introduced herself to people as the "friendly Parkinson's lady," she was surprised to see how receptive people were to the idea. Maureen has created a network of people who are willing to donate their bottles and cans for us to recycle, the money raised is then sent as a donation to PSBC. Some households leave out recyclables for Maureen. Several gentlemen, as well as a husband and wife, even collect for us! We also have the widow of a former group member who collects for us. Maureen has become quite friendly

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A candid shot of Maureen accepting a delivery of bottles and cans from a neighbour.

with a few along her route. It is a lot of work collecting, sorting and taking to recycling but it's worth the effort.

We endeavour to donate \$200 every two months to PSBC. We aim for more in the summer when the Shipyards Night Market in North Vancouver is in operation.

The following list is an example of what \$200 might look like in bottle and can recycling:

- 2,000 beer cans
- 4,000 small water bottles
- 2,000 beer bottles
- 1,000 large water bottles
- 2,000 small wine bottles
- 1,000 large juice boxes
- 4,000 pop cans
- 4,000 small juice boxes

Maureen uses the car every Wednesday to do her recycling route. After parking at a convenient place, she walks up and down laneways collecting and getting to know people as she goes. Everything is stored in the trunk or on the back seat and then

taken to the depot where we sort all the recyclables into categories. It can get very noisy at the depot but generally everyone is friendly.

Between January and October of 2016, we have donated \$1,775 to PSBC through our recycling efforts and hope to make it \$2,000 by December. It is incredibly rewarding to see the dollars mounting up each month, knowing it is going to a good cause. We would like to acknowledge the support of our donors, past and present, whose help has made our endeavours so interesting. They have been wonderful.

West Coast College of Massage Therapy

West Coast College of Massage Therapy holds a special massage clinic for people with Parkinson's, caregivers and support workers.



The clinic is on **Thursdays from 4:00 pm to 7:45 pm**. The cost is \$13 for people with Parkinson's and \$22 for carepartners and support workers.

We have received excellent feedback from those who have attended the clinic. If you are interested, please call the clinic receptionist at **604 520 1830**.

Access is through the back entrance on Clarkson Street and is wheelchair accessible.



West Coast College of MASSAGE Therapy

Roger and Maureen donate to help ensure that others have access to PSBC support groups and resources to help ease the burden of Parkinson's disease. The Society is grateful for their ongoing support and dedication. If you would like to get involved and speak to someone at PSBC about giving, please reach out to Rav Kambo at rkambo@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330.



Vancouver

Cranbrook

Surrey

Prince George

Parkville



On behalf of PSBC and the Parkinson's community...

Thank you British Columbia!
We raised \$414,614!

It takes a community to fight Parkinson's and 27 locations across the province participated in Parkinson SuperWalk.

Proceeds from SuperWalk help to fund research, education and support services.

You are Parkinson's heroes inspiring extraordinary hope!



Maple Ridge



Vernon



Kelowna



Oliver

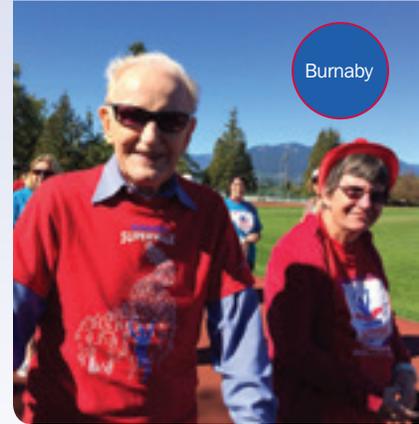
Sincere Thanks

Thank you to everyone for your participation, donations and support of the 26th annual Parkinson SuperWalk. Your generosity has helped to raise over \$414,614 and counting. These funds will allow the Society to extend its reach, providing programming and services for the 13,300 British Columbians living with Parkinson's.

TOTAL RAISED BY COMMUNITY

■ 100 Mile House	\$2,311.00
■ Burnaby	\$7,305.00
■ Campbell River	\$1,849.00
■ Chase	\$370.00
■ Chilliwack	\$7,939.55
■ Cranbrook	\$3,690.00
■ Elk Valley	\$14,579.60
■ Fort St. James	\$1,560.00
■ Fraser Valley/Fort Langley	\$9,701.27
■ Gingolx	\$1,555.00
■ Invermere	\$185.00
■ Kamloops	\$28,855.05
■ Kelowna	\$57,699.89
■ Nelson	\$2,395.00

■ Oliver	\$3,685.15
■ Parksville	\$9,043.00
■ Pitt Meadows/Maple Ridge	\$21,818.00
■ Powell River	\$5,830.00
■ Prince George	\$13,750.00
■ Richmond	\$18,568.00
■ Salmon Arm	\$4,897.40
■ Surrey	\$19,221.26
■ Terrace	\$1,450.00
■ Vancouver	\$107,254.90
■ Vernon	\$13,257.60
■ Victoria	\$20,043.00
■ White Rock	\$28,571.00



Superb SuperStar Walkers (Raised \$5,000-\$14,000)

Elk Valley: Terry Hume

Kelowna: Wayne Adams, Garry Toop – **Top Individual raising \$15,849.30**

Powell River: Henry Cummings

Surrey: Holly Parrish

Vancouver: James Smerdon, Suzanne Stothers, Valerie Swannell, Deborah Yeates

Victoria: Patricia Wood

SuperStar Supreme Walkers (Raised \$2,500-\$4,999)

Burnaby: Linda Dawson

Chilliwack: Judi Weisbrod

Cranbrook: Annalee Siemens

Elk Valley: Shelley Hume

Kamloops: Ruth Konrad, Jane Osterloh, Jenica Sawyer, Bryan White

Kelowna: Ralph Ayers, Wendy Olinger, Carole Taylor, Robert Thompson

Nelson: Renice Townsend

Parksville: Doug Pickard

Pitt Meadows/Maple Ridge:

Audrey Cerny, Edith Elliott

Prince George: Crystal Beddome, John Corbett, Carolyn Lamb

Richmond: Joseph Denofreo, John Miller, Helge Nielsen, Charlene Wong

Surrey: John & Mary Manuel

Vancouver: Elspeth Banerd, Megan Boyle, Julia Payson, Chelsea Rae-Arthur, John Smerdon, Janet Stuehmer, May Wong

Vernon: Rhona Parsons, Colleen Vollan

Victoria: Kate Wood

White Rock: Elizabeth Holroyd, Shelley Jackson

SuperStar Walkers (Raised \$1,000-\$2,499)

Burnaby: Michael Dawson

Chilliwack: Carol Dyck, Irene Janssen

Elk Valley: Gloria Matatall, Merl Shelley

Fort St. James: Sara Sam

Kamloops: Rodney Hobbs,

Sandy & Ellen McCurrach, Rendy Olthuis, Linda Ritchie, Lynda Sawyer, Brianna Senner, Wesley Stephens

Kelowna: Peter Baigent, John Hallam, Deborah Hartley, Ross McGaw, Shelley Schreyer, John Thor

Pitt Meadows/Maple Ridge:

Carol Carson, David Hardie, Wim Hunfeld, Helen Kleindienst, Chris Olsen

Richmond: Don Henderson, Philip Li, Jean Nykyforuk, Rex Mondejar

Salmon Arm: Emile Roy

Surrey: Leonard Dyer, Chris Parrish, Karen Pooni

Vancouver: Jan Carley, Tracey-Lee Eddy, Jill Goertzen, Gail Guise, Susan Hardman, Darcie Kerr, William Koch, Christina Louey, Dan McPhee, John Patterson, Leone Payson, Sally Pollock, Amanda Sayfy, Grant Sheinin, Bernice Smerdon, Suzanne Williams

Victoria: Camille Cuthill, Louise Dillabough, Jason Macnaughton, Diana Satok, George Surdu

White Rock: Linda Bickerton-Ross, Sandra Davidson, Pat Jones, Natalie Moser, Nancy Shewfelt, Tracey Valente

BC Teams (Raised \$1,000+)

100 Mile House: Cariboo Konrads

Burnaby: Burnaby Walkers & Rollers, Dawson Duo, Dazzling Dawsons

Chilliwack: Janssen family

Cranbrook: Grannalee

Elk Valley: Team Merle, What's shaking

Fraser Valley/Langley: Jerry's Jiggers, McElhoes, ParKrahn, Stenstrom Family

Kamloops: Sandy's SuperWalkers, Shake Rattle & Roll, Team Nonie (Lynda Sawyer)

Kelowna: Baigent, Friends & Family, Good Vibrations, Group Therapy, Team Thor

Pitt Meadows/Maple Ridge: Are we there yet?, Carol's Crusaders, Determined for Diane, Elliott Walkers, Pop's Posse, Team K, Team Whonnock

Prince George: Team Uncle Barry

Richmond: Helge Nielsen, Henderson, The Mondejars, Wong Family

Surrey: A&W Cruisers, Manuel walkers

Terrace: Terrace for a cure

Vancouver: Airhole, J Walkers, John Patterson, Mayede, PaysonQueckRennie, Red Hot Chili Steppers, Remembering Bryan, Saskatchewan Roots, Sayfy Super Walkers, Shake Me To Your Leader, **Show Me The Smerdons – Top Team Raising \$16,846**, Team Boyle, TEAM DITO, Team Hope, Team Janet, Team Val, The Hustlers

Vernon: Colin's Carebears

Victoria: Movers and Shakers, Papa's hurry up and wait gang, Smith's Gunners, Woods Walkers

White Rock: Buena Vista Massage, Fearless Friends, Float like a Butterfly-Sting like a Bee, Jones Team, Semiahmoo Athletic Club, Team Elizabeth

At the time of publication, the Parkinson SuperWalk information listed herein was deemed to be accurate. As Parkinson Society British Columbia will continue to accept SuperWalk donations until the end of the year, this information may change.

Parkinson SuperWalk in British Columbia is being operated by Parkinson Society British Columbia under license of Parkinson Canada.

PROVINCIAL SPONSOR



REGIONAL SPONSORS



Researcher Profile: Charles Ducrot, PhD



Making connections is not only important for peoples' emotional well-being – it is also critical for healthy brains. As researchers are now discovering, the synapses, or the connections that convey signals and information from neuron to another, may hold clues to what causes Parkinson's disease.

At the University of Montreal, molecular biologist Charles Ducrot investigates the role synapses play as dopamine-producing neurons in one part of the brain are more vulnerable to death than those in another part of the brain.

Earlier research has already established the death of these dopamine-producing neurons as central to Parkinson's disease. Now Ducrot, a PhD student, is testing whether less vulnerable neurons in the brain's ventral tegmental area (VTA) stay alive longer than those in the substantia nigra because the VTA neurons establish more synapses that release a chemical messenger called glutamate. Such synapses may allow them to communicate better with their target cells and receive signals that facilitate their survival.

Ducrot wants to find out if dopamine-producing brain cells in the substantia nigra die because they have fewer glutamate synapses, resulting in being unable to receive as many survival signals.

To test his theory, Ducrot and his colleagues have identified key proteins involved in forming these connections, or synapses. Using cell cultures, he will increase or decrease the amount of these proteins expressed in the cells to change the number of synapses the neurons form. Then he will expose the cells to toxins that produce Parkinson-like symptoms, to see if the brain cells with fewer synapses are more likely to die.



Survival of Dopamine Neurons in Parkinson's Disease: The Role of Synaptic Contacts

■ Graduate Student Award

University of Montreal
\$30,000 over two years

■ Funding

Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC) contributes to the Parkinson Quebec Research Fund**, which supports scholars in Quebec making significant contributions to Parkinson's research. For an up to date description of projects supported by PSBC, please visit <http://www.parkinson.bc.ca/research/>.

**Funded by Quebec Research Fund on Parkinson of Parkinson Quebec and Parkinson Society British Columbia, through the Parkinson Canada Research Program

"We know that synaptic contacts are very important, and in some way involved in survival," Ducrot says. "If we increase the expression of these proteins, we increase the number of synapses, and we might decrease the vulnerability of neurons in Parkinson's disease."

If Ducrot can prove his theory, he hopes to lay the foundation for a new type of gene therapy.

2017 Year at a Glance

Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC) is pleased to announce our education and support services plan for the upcoming year. In keeping with our goals to extend our reach and inspire hope, we will be bringing educational sessions to several communities across the province. We will also be hosting a large conference in Vancouver in June. Details will be coming soon to the PSBC website and be provided in the spring issue of *Viewpoints*.

Should you have any questions, concerns or feedback on our plans for 2017, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We are here to serve you and welcome your thoughts.

New Resources

- Communication & Swallow Booklet, available online at:
<http://bit.ly/CSBooklet>
- Aware in Care Kit: Available soon



More Events

(dates & details to be determined)

- Community Talks
- Newly Diagnosed Event
- Time out for Carepartners
- YOPD 4-Week Webinar Series
- YOPD Picnic
- Drawing for Cognitive Exercise Workshop
- Nelson/Trail/Castlegar/Cranbrook: Staff Presentation
- Debriefing the Caregiver Role Workshop
- Webinars for adult children & health care professionals

Upcoming Events

Communication & Swallow Workshops

- Vancouver – Friday, January 27, 2017
- Victoria – May 2017
- Chilliwack – November 2017

Regional Conferences

- Kelowna – March 2017
- Victoria – November 2017

Annual General Meeting

- Vancouver – April 2017

Step by Step

12 Week Walking Program

- Participating communities across the province – April 2017

Join us for our Provincial Conference in Vancouver

COMING
June 2017

This summer, we're bringing together world-class experts in Parkinson's disease for our Provincial Conference. Join hundreds of like-minded people from the Parkinson's community for an inspiring, educational and energizing one-day event.

Details to follow at www.parkinson.bc.ca

Thank you to volunteers

2016 was a busy, successful year. Much of this is thanks to a dedicated network of volunteers across British Columbia. On behalf of the staff at PSBC, thank you!

The Joy of Volunteering

Like many non-profit organizations, Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC) relies heavily on the hard work of volunteers. A volunteer board of directors oversees the Society's strategic direction; dedicated volunteer facilitators make our support groups pillars of hope in their communities; and passionate individuals organize local events to help raise funds for the Society's services.

Many of PSBC's long-time volunteers are either individuals with Parkinson's disease (PD) or have a personal connection to someone with PD. Some may be puzzled as to why people who have already taken on so much can afford to do even more. Recent studies have spawned broad social conversations about the tangible benefits of volunteering.

Physical Benefits

Some studies (and subsequent articles in popular news outlets) have claimed that volunteering can improve physical health.

According to a study led by Sarah Konrath at the University of Michigan, not only do volunteers tend to live longer than people who don't volunteer, but volunteers who are motivated by selfless reasons tend to outlive volunteers who may be active out of self-interest.

In a separate study that focuses on the effects of volunteering in older adults, researchers concluded

that adults who volunteered at least 4 hours a week tend to have lower blood pressure than their peers (Santi, 2016). It is important to keep in mind that correlation does not equal causation; adults who are engaged with their community might simply be physically active, likely increasing their chances of lower blood pressure. With that in mind, it can't hurt to get out of the house and to feel good about the work you are doing!

Emotional Benefits

Evidence continues to build in support of the theory that volunteerism has strong emotional benefits. A long-term study published in the British Medical Journal discovered that there is a positive association between volunteering and good mental and emotional health, especially in individuals over 40. In a study of 600 individuals conducted by the Australian Meals on Wheels Association, respondents reported that volunteering contributed to their overall sense of belonging and purpose while establishing friendship and social ties (Broer, 2016). Many PSBC volunteers, such as Sandra Alexander, indicate that they enjoy the social aspect of volunteering.



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Sandra Alexander is a carepartner whose husband, Gary, was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2007. Soon thereafter they joined PSBC as members and became involved with the Just Giver 4 PD ride; Gary as a cyclist and Sandra as a registration volunteer. Since then, Sandra has volunteered in a number of capacities at the Gala, Champions events as well as Parkinson SuperWalk in Vancouver. After years of active involvement, we contacted Sandra to learn more about her volunteer experience.

Why do you volunteer for PSBC?

I have always felt you can get so much more information and support when you are actively involved with a group. Meeting people and their families going through the challenges of this disease has helped us gain a lot of insight and information.

What keeps you coming back to volunteer?

The people! I have met so many amazing people volunteering for PSBC – from the fabulous staff at the office to the many individuals affected by their disease and their significant others and family. The volunteer events are well organized and I am consistently asked to come back, which is always nice.

Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?

I absolutely love volunteering for the community. I do a lot of volunteering and have been very active for over 35 years; sitting on boards, committees and offering support in any manner needed. I look forward

to eventually no longer working fulltime, so I would be able to devote more time to this great cause.

Three Steps to Volunteering

1 Choose a cause that is near and dear to your heart.

The greater you care about a cause, the more likely it is that you will volunteer for a longer period of time. Additionally, many organizations have a mandate to directly engage with individuals who have a connection to their mission – making your involvement mutually beneficial.

2 Assess your skillset.

This can go one of two ways. If you have a strong skillset that is in high demand, you may want to search specifically for roles that require your expertise. Is there a gap in your knowledge? This could be an excellent opportunity to learn and grow, but you may want to be up front about wanting to learn and work alongside a mentor.

3 Be realistic.

We've established that volunteering is a valuable activity for many. Before getting swept away with any type of project, it is important to honestly examine your current lifestyle. How many hours a week can you reasonably commit to? Are there times of the year you are unavailable? Are you willing to commute to and from a volunteer position? These are just some of the questions you should take into consideration before you begin to reach out to others about volunteer roles.

Additionally, once you've taken on a position, be honest and self-reflective about the role. Sometimes, a volunteer opportunity that seems ideal at first is just not a good fit. Don't be afraid to communicate clearly with your supervisor or volunteer coordinator. It is more likely that they will try to find another way you can help rather than recruit someone entirely new.

continued on page 14...

Would you like to volunteer with Parkinson Society British Columbia?

PSBC is always looking for dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers. At any given time of the year, there are numerous projects and events that require energy and enthusiasm from British Columbians. We are currently recruiting:

Support Group Facilitators

A support group facilitator works to create an environment that is safe and respectful, and where participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences, insight and knowledge with others.

Speakers Bureau

Are you a retired health care professional, teacher or public speaker? Would you be interested in spreading awareness to communities about Parkinson's disease? PSBC is looking for individuals who are passionate, educated and experienced with Parkinson's disease who are interested in sharing their knowledge with the public through presentations.

▶ To learn more about becoming a support group facilitator or speakers bureau volunteer, please contact Stacey Dawes, Information & Programs Manager at sdawes@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330.

Advocacy Ambassadors

PSBC aims to be an effective advocate for issues important to the Parkinson's community. To be successful, we need grassroots support from our community.

▶ If you are interested in joining our provincial and/or national advocacy networks, please contact Jean Blake, Chief Executive Officer at jblake@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330.

Events Volunteers

There will be numerous short-term volunteer positions that will arise in 2017.

▶ If you would like to be part of an upcoming fundraising or educational event, please reach out to Mirela Dzaferovic, Resource Development & Volunteer Coordinator at mdzaferovic@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330.

References:

Broer, S. (2016, October 6). Volunteering has knock-on effects for health and wellbeing. *Australian Ageing Agenda*. Retrieved from: <http://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2016/10/06/volunteering-knock-effects-health-wellbeing/>

Ramos, R. et. al. (2015). Busy yet socially engaged: volunteering, work-life balance, and health in the working

population. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 52(2), 164-172. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25654517>

Santi, J. (2016). *The Giving Way to Happiness: Stories and Science Behind the Life-Changing Power of Giving* (2nd edition). New York, NY: Tarcher Perigree.

Do you have Parkinson's related legal issues?

Blakes

Through a partnership with PSBC, the law firm of **Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP** offers free of charge legal services to people with Parkinson's in British Columbia.

The Litigation Support Program from Blakes addresses legal issues such as discrimination against individuals with Parkinson's in the workplace; discrimination in accommodations, services or facilities that are generally available to the public; and, wrongful denial of disability insurance or denial of government services.

If you have a legal problem relating to Parkinson's disease, please contact **Jean Blake, CEO** at jblake@parkinson.bc.ca for more information.

4PEAKS 4PD – JUST GIVER 4PD

On Sunday, June 5, 2016, Just Giver 4PD Cycling Club tackled the four peaks of Burnaby Mountain, Mount Seymour, Grouse and Cypress while raising awareness for Parkinson's disease. This 140 kilometer ride raised \$18,157 for PSBC, and cyclists are raring to top that amount in 2017!

AVIVA COMMUNITY FUND – AWARE IN CARE

Parkinson Society British Columbia would like to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who voted for our Aware in Care project during the Aviva Community Fund voting round in October. We are sincerely grateful for the support; the



project earned thousands of votes. Unfortunately, it did not continue to the final round for funding consideration. We are still exploring opportunities to help realize our dream of making these kits available to all British Columbians with Parkinson's disease.

ONLINE CHARITY AUCTION FOR PSBC

Thank you to one of Parkinson Society British Columbia's biggest supporters, Val Swannell, for helping us attain a wide variety of excellent items for the PSBC Fall Online Auction! Some notable highlights included a 7-day Holland America cruise, delectable coffee and wine baskets, and an HD TV. Bidders have generously raised over \$9,604!

2017 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY
27

SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE! CONCERT

Emily Chambers is back with musical guests for an evening of entertainment in the heart of Vancouver.

Date: Friday, January 27, 2017

Place: The Imperial
319 Main Street, Vancouver

Cost: \$25 Regular
\$125 VIP reception & concert

(\$65 tax receipt. Receipts will be issued in 2017 following the event.)

➡ To purchase tickets, visit <http://www.parkinson.bc.ca/how-to-help/shake-concert>

AUGUST
31

COTSWOLDS WALKING HOLIDAY

Join experienced long distance walker, Brian Wood, on the Cotswolds Walking Holiday benefitting Parkinson Society British Columbia.

Date: August 31 to September 8, 2017

Place: Bourton-on-the-Water, England

Cost: \$1,969.00 Land packages
\$3,269.00 Air & land

Please note that participants will be responsible for their own travel arrangements and costs. All donations accumulated through fundraising will help provide essential programs and services to people with Parkinson's through PSBC.

STEP 1 – Make your travel arrangements with Peter Wheaton at Athlone Travel.

➡ Phone: 250-598-5252 | Toll Free: 1-888-987-2351
Email: peter@athlonetravel.com

STEP 2 – Register online to fundraise for PSBC on the Cotswolds Walking Holiday.

➡ Visit <http://pdchampions.kintera.org/cotswoldswalk>



Champions FOR PARKINSON'S

What do a baseball game, a benefit concert and a cycling event all have in common? They're all fundraising events organized by Champions for Parkinson's in 2016.

Champions for Parkinson's are individuals or groups who have organized a fundraising event in their community. These Champions play a key role in generating awareness and funds that support Parkinson Society British Columbia's (PSBC) research contributions, programs and services to help ease the burden and find a cure for Parkinson's disease.

No idea is too large or too small, and PSBC staff is well equipped to help make your event a success. We are currently recruiting Champions for 2017 and invite you to join our team.

Shake
Shake
Shake!



4 Peaks
for PD



A&W
Root Beer
Floats



For more information, contact Mirela Dzaferovic at mdzaferovic@parkinson.bc.ca | 1-800-668-3330

 Parkinson Society
British Columbia
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